

89.—CATCH OF SHAD IN THE HUDSON RIVER FOR 1885.

By E. G. BLACKFORD.

The statistics of the catch of shad in the Upper Hudson, which extends from Albany to Highland Falls (some 2 miles below West Point), were compiled by Mr. Matthew Kennedy, of Hudson, N. Y., and those for the Lower Hudson, which extends from Peekskill to New York Bay, were collected by Mr. Joseph H. Godwin, jr., of Kingsbridge, N. Y. The above gentlemen took account of all shad caught in the Hudson and sent to other than New York markets. In New York City Mr. W. H. Faulhaber obtained statistics of all shad on the west side of the city, while the figures for the east side, comprising Fulton Market and vicinity, were gathered by Mr. L. T. Herrmann. A summary of these statistics is as follows:

Sold in the New York markets.....	796,312
Additional catch in the Upper Hudson	276,273
Additional catch in the Lower Hudson.....	102,250
Total	1,174,835

The average price of the catch for the season was \$15 per hundred, making the total value of the catch at wholesale prices \$176,225.25.

From information received from fishermen and shippers it seems that the catch in the upper portion of the river shows a decrease of about 40 per cent as compared with the previous five years, and between Albany and Barrytown the catch this year as compared with that of five years ago is one-half less, and with ten years shows a decrease of about two-thirds. Less fishing is done on this account, some grounds being entirely abandoned, and others but partially fished. South of Barrytown, however, there is an increase in the number of nets and fishermen, which makes it all the more difficult for the shad to reach their natural spawning grounds.

The fishermen report the season also a poor one in the lower part of the river, the principal reason given being the cold weather during the early part of the season, when the best catches are usually made. During the early run of the fish, moreover, the nets were more or less choked up with a weed or grass (called "oakum") from the bottom, which occasioned great inconvenience and prevented the taking of many fish. More shad were taken by drift-nets and fykes in shallow water and on the flats than for several years before. This is perhaps due to the fish leaving the cold deep water and seeking for warmth in the shallow waters.

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